

January 19, 2001

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U.S. Food & Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket No. 98P-0151/CP1

Gentlemen:

We are writing to ask that you grant the above petition to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals.

Animals who are too sick or injured to even stand should not be allowed to enter the human food chain. Obviously, the USDA agrees with this, as they will no longer purchase meat from downed cows for Federal programs, including the National School Lunch Program.

In addition to posing an increased risk for bacterial contamination, there is evidence that some downed animals may be afflicted with a form of BSE, a disease which has been linked to a fatal human illness.

It is impossible to move downed animals humanely, and they are typically pushed with tractors or dragged with chains - inhumane processes which cause injuries ranging from bruises and abrasions to broken bones and torn ligaments.

Downed animals comprise a very small percentage of animals slaughtered, and prohibiting their marketing will cause no undue economic hardship. Is it worth it to jeopardize the health of consumers and subject these innocent animals to so much fear and pain for the sake of such a small percentage of animals??

Industry experts have estimated that 90% of downed animals can be prevented with better care and handling. Removing the market for downed animals will provide an incentive to industry to prevent downed animals in the first place. (In other words, they don't care enough about the welfare of the animals to take better care, as they can be killed anyway...a great commentary on the meat industry.) Anyone still forcing downed animals to slaughter should be heavily fined. If the slaughterhouse continues to accept these animals, they should be closed down.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan & Hubert van Asch van Wyck
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